

SALT (verif)
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NEWS CONFERENCE

#482

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 2:30 P.M. EDT

JUNE 21, 1979

THURSDAY

MR. POWELL: I have one announcement to make and then I will be glad to take your questions.

At the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China, Vice President Walter F. Mondale will make an official visit to the People's Republic of China in August of 1979.

The Vice President will be visiting the PRC as the President's personal representative to continue the important process of high level consultations on both bilateral and multilateral issues of major importance to the United States and to the People's Republic of China.

That visit will also permit a review of the broad range of significant developments in United States-People's Republic of China relations that have taken place since normalization of relations on January 1, 1979.

The details of that visit and schedule are still being worked out. If you want to pursue it further, I suggest you contact Al Eisele in the Vice President's Office.

Q Is a trip by the President contemplated at some time?

MR. POWELL: I am sure sometime, someplace. There are no plans under way that I am aware of.

Q Was the original invitation to the President and is Mondale substituting for the President?

MR. POWELL: The only thing, as I believe you know, at the visit here, there was a general in-principle, and so forth; so far as I know that's the way it stands. It has not gone beyond that. He is not substituting for the President in that sense.

Q Is the Vice President going in August because the President did not choose to go, or can't go in August?

MR. POWELL: The President isn't going to go in August. Obviously, if he were going, the Vice President probably wouldn't be going at the same time. But in the sense I took your question -- are we sending the Vice President to substitute for the President -- no.

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proper benefits both to the consumer now with regard to gasoline and later on with regard to home heating oil that should be flowing from the increased imports.

Q Can you answer questions about the trucking?

MR. POWELL: I am not the person to ask about trucking.

Q I have a general question. Could you characterize how much of this legislation the President described this morning was attributable to White House and how much Senator Kennedy had a role in preparing?

MR. POWELL: I can't give you, in great detail -- I believe the process was that we obviously consulted with Senator Kennedy and others and that several weeks ago we were notified by his office that their determination was rather than pursuing their own legislation, to support the Administration's legislation.

If you want to pursue that, I can let you talk to people who were involved in it. There were some stories while we were gone that sort of outlined the principal differences between our legislation and the legislation that the Senator had originally proposed. We appreciated his willingness to do that.

Q The President told Congress that SALT II is not based on trust but on our Nation's means of verification through sophisticated satellites, powerful electronics and a vast intelligence network. I was wondering, has the President considered the possibility of asking Admiral Turner to verify this verification to offset what was reported by The New York Times?

MR. POWELL: Offset what?

Q What was reported about Turner's testimony in a closed meeting by The New York Times.

MR. POWELL: What specifically --

Q That we aren't able to verify. It appeared from that story that there is a conflict between what Admiral Turner reported and what the President told the Congress. And I wonder if the President --

MR. POWELL: There was no conflict in his testimony, and both Admiral Turner and the Secretary of Defense and several others have said that previously.

Q Has Admiral Turner stated that we can verify the Russian adherence to SALT?

MR. POWELL: That is not what I said, and you are well aware of his position.

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Q Has the Admiral backed up the President's statement at all?

MR. POWELL: His testimony does indeed support the President's statement.

Q The ADA is meeting in Washington this weekend and apparently they are going to pass a resolution either saying they don't support the President and are supporting an alternative, or flat out endorsing Senator Kennedy. Two questions: One, aside from sending Stu Eizenstat over there to speak tomorrow night, what kind of effort is the White House making to influence that decision and try to make it as little damaging to the President as possible? And secondly, how would the White House view one of those two resolutions? How damaging would you all consider it to the President's hopes for being the Democratic nominee and re-elected President?

MR. POWELL: We will, with any organization, make an effort to explain our positions and the reasons we believe them to be in the best interests of the country. Obviously the best interests of the country sometimes are in conflict with a particular interest or ideological positions of a given group. We would hope under those circumstances that we could enjoy their support. If we cannot, we will have to do our best to live with it.

Q Has the United States received any official response from the Somoza government on the murder of Bill Stewart?

MR. POWELL: That was to be directed to the State Department. I don't know at this point.

Q Has there been any talk in putting independent truckers on an equal footing with agricultural people to try to curb the shutdown on diesel fuel?

Q What was the question?

MR. POWELL: The question was about putting independent truckers on equal footing with agriculture with regard to the shutdown. Let me say there is, as you know, it was indicated --

Q What do you mean equal position with agriculture because of the shutdown? Do you mean giving them diesel fuel, too? Is that what you mean?

MR. POWELL: It is his question, not mine. (Laughter)

Q What do you mean?

MR. POWELL: I assume the reference is to Rule 9, which was used and imposed in order to provide sufficient -- and I might say very successfully -- to provide sufficient fuel for spring planting. The question to be decided now is whether that rule should now be suspended, and basically put everybody on the same footing. It was to expire within the next few weeks in any case. The question now is whether it is indeed to be suspended in order to put everybody on an equal footing which would make more diesel fuel available to the rest of the economy and thus to the trucking industry.

Let me say in answer to your question of consideration in the sense that I just described it, yes, I think we will have a decision in